

~~MONEY~~

~~DRUGS~~

~~BELONGING~~

~~EXPLOITATION~~

~~STATUS~~

~~GANGS~~

COUNTY  
LINES

THE REALITY

IT'S HAPPENING.

**YOUR AREA. YOUR STREET. YOUR HOME.**



# IT'S HAPPENING. **YOUR AREA. YOUR STREET. YOUR HOME.**

The term **County Lines** describes gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into other areas of the country, often smaller areas, using dedicated mobile phone lines known as 'deal lines.'

Dealers will take orders from drug users through mobile phones and exploit children and vulnerable people to move and store drugs and money. Often they do this through blackmail, intimidation and violence.

## HOW ARE CHILDREN BEING EXPLOITED?

Children and vulnerable people can be groomed online or face-to-face by a stranger or someone they know. They can receive money, mobiles, credit, expensive clothing, jewellery, or other items/ gifts in exchange for a specified task.

## WHAT IS CUCKOOING?

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crimes in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing.

## COMMON SIGNS

**Common signs to look out for which could indicate that a person is involved in County Lines and possible drug dealing:**

- Change in emotional wellbeing (e.g. secretive, withdrawn, aggressive, emotional)
- An increase in anti-social behaviour
- Missing episodes from home or school
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g clothes, jewellery, cash)

- Isolation from peers
- May be carrying a weapon
- Unexplained injuries

**The following signs suggest that someone could be a victim of cuckooing:**

- An increase in anti-social behaviour
- Other people seen inside the house or flat who don't normally live there
- People coming and going from the property at all hours
- More taxis and cars than usual appearing at the property
- Not seeing the person who lives there as frequently
- When you do see the occupant, they may appear anxious or distracted
- Seeing drugs paraphernalia near to the property

## CONCERNED?

### Make a report

If you are worried that someone is at immediate risk of harm contact 999.

### Staffordshire Police

Private message us on Facebook and Twitter  
Phone: 101

### Crimestoppers

Report anonymously:  
Phone 0800 555 111 or fill in their online form.

### Stoke-on-Trent City Council

If you are worried about a child or young person in Stoke-on-Trent, contact the **Safeguarding Referral Team** on 01782 235100 or out of hours 01782 234234

### Stafford County Council

If you are worried about a child or young person in Staffordshire contact **First Response** on 0800 1313 126 or out of hours 0345 6042 886

For 24/7 help and support about safeguarding or child protection, contact the **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)** helpline.  
Phone: 0800 800 5000

**The Children's Society** can also provide help and support:  
[www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

#THEREALITY